



CITY OF WINSTON, OREGON

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 17, 2026

1. Meeting Information

Meeting	Winston City Council Regular Meeting
Date	August 17, 2026
Location	Winston City Hall
Presiding Officer	Mayor Christie Knutson
Prepared By	Transcription Record
Status	Draft — Pending Approval at Next Regular Meeting

2. Attendance

A roll call was conducted at the start of the meeting.

Name / Title	Role	Status
Mayor Christie Knutson	Presiding Officer	Present
Councilor Allen Hobson	Council Member	Present
Councilor Dorie White	Council Member	Present (recused from Item 7.3 — Winston-Dillard Water District franchise agreement)
Councilor Dave Cunningham	Council Member	Present
Councilor Nicholas Wiggins	Council Member	Excused (family visiting from Florida)

Staff and Presenters Identified in the Recording

- Thomas McIntosh — City Manager
- Brandon Sarti — Winston Police Chief
- Chris Sherlock — Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent
- Paula Fetzer — Director, Friends of the Winston Library

Members of the Public Providing Testimony

- Steve Hammerson — Roseburg, Oregon resident

3. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Agenda Adjustments

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by roll call (see Attendance, above). The Mayor asked whether there were any adjustments to the agenda; none were requested.

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approval of August 3, 2026 Council Minutes

A motion was made to approve the August 3, 2026 Council minutes as presented.

Motion	Result
To approve August 3, 2026 Council minutes as presented by Hobson; second by White	PASSED — Unanimous (Aye); no opposition voiced

4.2 Acceptance of Economic Development Committee Minutes — July 8, 2026

Before the vote, Councilor Cunningham asked to make a brief comment for the benefit of the audience regarding a potential theme park development in the area of Lookingglass and Safari Roads that could have an indirect impact on the city, particularly the sewer department. No formal application has been filed on the project; the comment was offered only to put the matter on the record. It was also noted that the Douglas County Commissioners have granted \$150,000 for a research study related to the project.

Motion	Result
To accept Economic Development Committee minutes of July 8, 2026, as read by Cunningham; second by Hobson	PASSED — Unanimous (Aye); no opposition voiced

5. Public Comment

5.1 Flock Camera Transparency — Steve Hammerson, Roseburg

Steve Hamerson, a resident of Roseburg, Oregon, commended the Council and Mayor for their transparency regarding the Flock camera program, describing the topic as controversial and noting significant public interest (citing videos on the subject that received tens of thousands of views). He stated that placing the item on the agenda and allowing public discussion helped address a lack of proactive communication that has fueled controversy elsewhere.

6. Reports, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Schools

6.1 Friends of the Winston Library — Paula Fetzer, Library Director

- Presented the library's FY2025-26 year-end statistics and budget, and previewed the proposed FY2026-27 budget.
- Reported continued growth in patronage, including residents of the Green area, who use the Winston library because Roseburg charges a \$60 non-resident membership fee.
- Explained a roughly \$3,000 budget increase is driven by a state requirement that the library director work 20 hours/week (the state's definition of "part-time" for library certification purposes) rather than the 12 hours/week previously worked — a standard the prior director had misapplied. Grant funding does not cover the additional salary cost; grants may only be used for library provisions/materials.
- The library board will review and approve the FY2026-27 budget before it is brought back to the City Council for consideration.

6.2 Economic Development Committee — Dave Cunningham

- Reported on a proposed theme park concept in the area of Lookingglass and Safari Roads, a timber-themed development involving approximately 600 acres.
- Identified two areas of city concern: water demand on the water department, and sewage generation affecting the sewer/wastewater plant.
- Estimated jobs created at approximately 800 full-time jobs with up to 2,000 seasonal/peak positions.
- The property is located in tribal trust land within the Urban Growth Boundary but outside Winston city limits; because jurisdictional boundaries do not apply to tribal trust land in the same way, the city's regulatory involvement would be through local permitting and property tax mechanisms rather than direct annexation authority.
- The Douglas County Commissioners have granted \$150,000 for a research/feasibility study on the project. Developers had previously asked local officials to keep the project confidential; it was noted that the developers/investors have since begun discussing it publicly, so the confidentiality request no longer applies.
- No formal application or permit request has been filed; the item was accepted as informational only, with no council action taken.

6.3 Wastewater Treatment Plant — Chris Sherlock

- Routine operations update; staff have been managing various plant issues, described informally as "siphon debacles."
- Staff discovered structural cracks in the flute of inflow pump #3 (not currently leaking, but at the end of its service life). Replacement pumps were already budgeted and purchased this year and are available to install.
- On plant capacity: a prior flow-and-load study indicated the plant was over capacity in several areas, but that data included "recycle streams" that artificially inflated the load figures. Those recycle streams have since been removed. A more detailed facilities plan study is scheduled this year to produce a more accurate capacity picture; in the meantime, the plant continues to meet its discharge permit.
- Staff have no information indicating whether the proposed theme park development (Item 6.2) would connect to the city's wastewater system or construct its own facility.
- Discussed summertime plant discharge temperatures: the plant's effluent is currently cooler than the river itself, an unusual condition attributed to a mild summer without prolonged extreme heat (river temperatures cited at 79°F and, more recently, 75°F). Future facility planning will still need to address cooling requirements for warmer years.

6.4 Police Department — Chief Sarti

Grants

- \$5,000 CIS grant for administrative/operations support.
- \$10,000 body camera grant (CIS).
- \$5,000 evidence property grant, to fund an evidence dryer used to preserve evidence for prosecution.
- A grant to help fund the department's Lexipol policy/document management subscription, which supports the department's accreditation effort; Lexipol is used by nearly all Douglas County agencies (and widely across Oregon) to keep department policy current with case law, and Winston has used the system for approximately 15 years.
- \$5,000 officer wellness grant, written with a focus on encouraging time off after traumatic incidents (e.g., death notifications) rather than a more traditional counseling-benefit framing.
- A federal COPS hiring grant application (approximately \$125,000) submitted to help recover a currently-unfilled officer position; submitted based on current (reduced) staffing levels.
- An Oregon Business Development seismic retrofit grant (approximately \$2.3 million) — the Chief indicated the department believes this award is proceeding.

Accreditation

- The department's Lieutenant completed the department's accreditation work prior to his retirement (see below); the inspection component remains outstanding and the Chief will take it over directly. Successful accreditation is expected to yield approximately a 1% reduction in the city's insurance costs (roughly \$5,500/year).

Budget Reductions and Staffing

- The Chief described this year's budget reduction request as the largest he has experienced since becoming a manager with the city in 2004: the city requested a \$215,000 cut, well above his expectation of a \$50,000–\$80,000 reduction.
- The department's Lieutenant — 24 years of service with Winston and 30 years total in law enforcement — is retiring effective September 1, 2026. The Chief characterized the departure as related to budget-driven frustration rather than dissatisfaction with the department itself, and stated he does not yet have a plan for covering the resulting supervisory gap.
- The department is currently short-staffed by three positions: the outgoing Lieutenant, one officer assigned to D. I. N. T., and one officer on medical leave for back surgery (expected out approximately six months). The Chief indicated he may personally return to patrol duty on a short-term basis.

Flock Camera Program

- The Chief announced he has cancelled the city's Flock license-plate-reader camera contract effective immediately (vendor notified the same day), citing the program's cost as a significant factor in closing the budget gap.
- The Chief acknowledged the program's investigative value, including its role in solving a homicide, a drive-by shooting, and multiple park-area cases, but stated that public concern over privacy/"Big Brother" surveillance, combined with the budget shortfall, led to the decision to discontinue it.
- The eight Flock cameras were located just outside city limits.
- In discussing camera misuse elsewhere, the Chief noted that officers at another agency were previously terminated for improperly accessing camera data (described as using it to look up personal contacts); he clarified that such misuse is a LEDS/CJIS violation independent of the Flock system itself, and would result in termination regardless of which camera system was involved.

Municipal Court

- The court has never had a formal written policy and procedure manual; the Chief is developing one and cross-training staff to reduce costs.
- The Chief has engaged a retired dispatch supervisor to help audit and correct historical billing and fee-collection irregularities in the court.
- The ~~audit~~ *court clerk, Katie Starkel* uncovered systemic historical problems in the court's billing practices, including instances of overcharging and instances where owed fees were never collected or were collected longer than required. The Chief indicated similar training and procedural gaps have affected municipal courts in other Douglas County jurisdictions.

Community Outreach and Canine Program

- The Chief addressed public criticism he has received over discontinuing community-outreach programs, clarifying that the reductions are driven entirely by lack of funding rather than lack of commitment. He noted he personally created most of the department's community outreach programs over his eight years as chief (growing the department's community functions from 2 to approximately 16) and utilizes a certified officer serving as administrative assistant ("Sandy") to help staff these events; the programs are not affected by any lack of volunteers.
- On the canine unit: the Chief noted the unit and vehicle were funded through donations, but that the roughly \$8,600/year operating cost is difficult to justify given current overtime pressures — citing \$13,000 in overtime incurred on July 4th alone.

6.5 Administration — Thomas McIntosh

Mr. McIntosh acknowledged the difficulty of the police department's budget reductions and thanked the Chief for his service, describing the reductions as one of the hardest parts of his role as City Manager. He cited rising costs generally, and rising medical insurance costs in particular, as key drivers of the city's budget shortfall.

7. Old Business

7.1 Resolution 26-1237 — IGA with the State of Oregon (ODOT) for Automatic License Plate Reader Installation Along OR-42

Read by title only. This resolution would have authorized an intergovernmental agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation for the installation of automatic license plate reader (LPR) equipment along OR-42.

- The Mayor reported attending the Oregon Mayors Association (OMA) meeting in Ashland the prior week, where Flock cameras were discussed statewide; the Mayor noted Florence, Oregon was the only community that favored keeping its cameras, while public backlash in other communities led to their removal. The Mayor stated a personal belief that the cameras are valuable but acknowledged significant public concern.
- Staff reported that the city's Flock camera locations and list of authorized users have been posted publicly on the police department's website for transparency and oversight purposes. The cameras remain technically active but are in the process of being deactivated per the Chief's direction.
- Discussion covered the cost structure of LPR technology generally: Flock cameras cost approximately \$3,000 per camera plus \$500 installation; a comparison was drawn to the county-wide Douglas County LPR network, which reportedly includes approximately 8 cameras at the county level and approximately 6 in Roseburg. Other agencies also use similar LPR technology from other vendors (e.g., Taser-brand systems).
- Staff recommended the Council deny/terminate Resolution 26-1237, consistent with the decision to discontinue the Flock camera program, given the approximately \$24,000/year cost of the ODOT agreement and other higher-priority budget needs.
- No members of the public offered comment when the floor was opened.

Motion	Vote	Result
To terminate Resolution 26-1237 (State of Oregon/ODOT automatic license plate reader agreement) by Cunningham; second by Hobson	Aye; no opposition voiced	PASSED (resolution terminated — IGA not adopted)

7.2 Business License Revocation — 92 NW Glenhart

- Staff reported that a letter has already been sent to the business owner, initiated on a recommendation from the Police Department, giving the owner notice and an opportunity to participate in the process before the Council considers revocation at its next meeting.
- A council member raised due-process concerns, questioning whether a criminal charge, conviction, or formal adjudication had occurred prior to any revocation action, noting the presumption of innocence.
- In response, it was indicated by Chief Sarti that the police department would not want the individual doing business in the city regardless of the criminal case outcome, and that the department's investigation into the underlying matter has concluded and been referred to the District Attorney.
- The Council opted to withhold public details until the business owner has had an opportunity to respond.

7.3 Ordinance 26-725 — Franchise Agreement with Winston-Dillard Water District (Second Reading)

Read by title only — second reading. This ordinance grants a non-exclusive franchise to the Winston-Dillard Water District for maintenance and operation of a water system within city right-of-way.

- Staff (Mr. McIntosh) reported this is the same franchise agreement structure that has been in place for the previous five years, renewed without substantive changes other than updated dates. The city collects a 6% franchise fee on the District's gross revenue, generating approximately \$104,000–\$105,000 annually.
- In response to a council question, staff confirmed 6% is not the statutory maximum, but recommended maintaining the current rate to preserve the working relationship with the District, noting that rate increases are typically passed through to the District's ratepayers.
- Councilor White recused herself from the discussion and vote because she serves on the Winston-Dillard Water District board; a quorum was maintained among the remaining council members.

Motion	Vote	Result
Full adoption of Ordinance 26-725 (Winston-Dillard Water District franchise agreement) by Hobson; second by Cunningham.	Aye; Councilor White recused	PASSED

8. Consolidated Voting Summary

Item	Description	Vote	Result
Consent Agenda	Approval of August 3, 2026 Council minutes	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Consent Agenda	Acceptance of Economic Development Committee minutes, July 8, 2026	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Res. 26-1237	Termination of IGA with ODOT — automatic license plate reader installation	Aye	PASSED (terminated)
Ord. 26-725	Franchise agreement with Winston-Dillard Water District (2nd reading, full adoption)	Aye (White recused)	PASSED

9. Non-Agenda Items / Good of the Order

- Check copies, and claims in excess of \$500 were included in Council packets per standard practice.
- Announcement: the Urban Renewal Agency will meet Thursday at 5:30 PM at City Hall.
- Announcement: a free walk-in Medicare/Medicaid assistance event with SHIBA will be held Wednesday, August 26, all day, at City Hall.
- Executive session: none held.

Informal Follow-Up Discussion

Following the formal announcements, council members briefly discussed a nearby development property. Staff advised that a public hearing before the Planning Commission is scheduled for September 2, 2026, regarding a plan amendment/zone change to high-density residential to accommodate a proposed apartment development of approximately 105 units. The site has encountered archaeological areas that will need to be worked around. Staff noted the submitted application meets the applicable code criteria, which constrains staff to a recommendation of approval, though the school district may raise separate capacity concerns.

10. Action Items & Follow-Up

Action Item	Responsible Party	Deadline / Notes
Present FY2026-27 library budget to the Library Board, then return to Council for approval	Paula Fetzer / Library Board	Timing not specified
Complete wastewater facilities plan study to establish accurate plant capacity	Wastewater Treatment staff	This fiscal year
Install budgeted replacement inflow pump (pump #3)	Wastewater Treatment staff	Timing not specified
Finalize cancellation of Flock camera contract with vendor	Chief Sarti	In progress

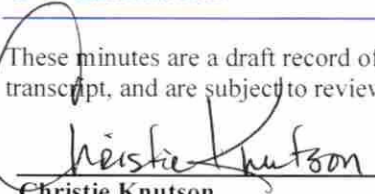
Action Item	Responsible Party	Deadline / Notes
Complete accreditation inspection component	Chief Sarti	Timing not specified
Pursue federal COPS hiring grant and Oregon seismic retrofit grant awards	Chief Sarti	In progress
Develop formal municipal court policy and procedure manual; continue audit of historical court billing/collections	Chief Sarti / Court staff	Ongoing
Attend meeting regarding municipal court procedures	Chief Sarti	Day following this meeting
Planning Commission public hearing on plan amendment/zone change for ~105-unit apartment development	Planning Commission / Staff	September 2, 2026

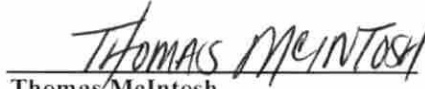
11. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. 8:02.

Certification

These minutes are a draft record of the Winston City Council meeting held on August 17, 2026, reconstructed from an audio transcript, and are subject to review and approval at a subsequent regular meeting.


 Christie Knutson
 Mayor, Presiding Officer


 Thomas McIntosh
 City Manager